

CompuClub

Where Atari owners belong.

* ATARI NEWS *

No question about it, as we first told you 4 months ago (and hedged on last month) Atari is introducing an expansion box with both a CPM card and an MS DOS card to follow. The expansion box has been shown to third party card manufactures who now make cards for the Apple in hopes of having a full range of cards available for use in the expansion box when it is released later this year.

The above paragraph was the last opening I had planned for this section before Jack Treamil bought Atari. Now everything is different and I am rewriting this for the third time. What everyone wants to know is if this purchase is good or bad news. Well I think its going to be great news for all of us. Most of you have noticed that there is a real lack of new software for the Atari. Right now there are 5 new programs being introduced for the Commodore to each one for the Atari. The reason is that most software houses have had a wait and see position on Atari. Further the large software wholesalers are not stocking the number of titles for the Atari that they did in the past for the same reason. Treamil will bring several things to Atari. The most important is a reputation as a man who sells a lot of product and that is what suppliers want to hear before they invest programmers time in writing for Atari. The second good thing about the purchase is Treamil's intention to take Atari into the business market in a big way. If he doesn't cheapen up the home machines too much in the process this might be the best thing to happen to Atari in a long time.

Other info: Synfile (club price \$74.95) is now available and it looks super. It appears to be everything that was promised back in November when it was to be a SYNAPSE product. We will have a full report at a later date but this has now become the Database of choice in the ATARI market. Some of the features of this super product include the ability to merge with AtariWriter, SYN Calc, and VisiCalc. A choice of densities, look up tables, and a ton more.

SYN Calc (club price \$74.95) is here too, and its a full step ahead of Visicalc. this is the most powerful spreadsheet you can buy for atari and about as good a spreadsheet as you can buy for any 8 bit machine. For \$74.45 (club price) there is no spreadsheet product to compare with it on the market today.

SYN trend (club price \$74.95) is the third part of this package and the weakest. Although is is a powerful and fully compatible part of the SYN business package it does not quite compare with the B GRAPH package in the quality of its graphics.

The last part of this group of business packages is (surprise) ATARIWRITER. Atari has pulled a surprise on everyone and the little old AtariWriter you now have will merge with the new SYNfile and SYNcalc.

Another new product that will be making a lot of noise in

the fall is PLATO. This cartridge allows your Atari computer to emulate a terminal which rents for \$1000.00 a month. When you use the PLATO cart. to call Control Data Corp.'s PLATO Network you will be accessing the largest Database network in the world. Through Plato you will be offered over 20,000 hours of training in hundreds of subjects ranging all the way from here to there. I would strongly recommend you read the long article in the June ANTIC at least twice and get ready to order a PLATO cart. as soon a they become available (in the fall).

PAPER TRACTOR

list price \$11.95

Club Price \$7.50

If you have a printer which only has tractor feed and you would like the ability to print on single sheets of paper without buying an expensive attachment for you printer then this is for you. All you really need is something with sprocket holes on both sides that will hold your paper stright and carry it through the printer right? Well that is all that this is. Paper Tractor is a 3 foot piece of plastic with sprocket holes that can hold a single piece of paper as it moves through the printer. Simple and effective for less money than 150 baseball cards.

HAPPY 1050'S 810'S

As many of you know we have been carrying Happy Disk Drive enhancements for quite some time. Happily we will be carrying the new 1050 version as soon as they are available. Happily we are also dropping the price on both models to \$199.00. We are taking orders now for the both models. The 810 versions are in stock and the 1050's are due in around the third week of July according to Happy.

SUMMER SALE

ON INDUS™

For orders placed from July 1, 1984 to August 31, 1984 the price on the Indus GT disk drive, with software will be.....

\$359.00

Remember your order must be postmarked or your phone order placed between the two dates listed above.

Shipping continues to be \$2.00 for UPS and \$5.00 for US Mail.

Overseas shipping for Indus will be \$15.00 each.

As always there is no hidden charge for Credit Card orders.

DISKBANK \$14.95

Holds 50+ disks!

A disk file box the holds at least 50 disks with a smoked cover, this diskbox is quite honestly a flip and file knockoff with some improvements. The box offers a built in handle and a self locking cover. If your storing your disks in corners and under chairs now this is the way to organize your files into an attractive file at a low cost!

LJK SALE

In addition to the 1/2 price sale on DATA PERFECT we are offering a special on LETTER PERFECT/SPELL PERFECT!! The regular list price on Letter Perfect is 99.95 The regular list price on Spell Perfect is 79.95

The New Club price for BOTH
\$74.95

DOG OF THE MONTH

This months dog of the month was one of the easiest selections I have made in a long time. We are awarding the Big Bark to Gemini Software for their latest offering DIGI VOICE. This \$39.95 product is advertised as being able to take sound input from a cassette player and digitize it and save it to disk to be played back later on your ATARI. Since we know several large companies are working on this process we were quite eager to see the Gemini version. The program opens with a great looking screen which give you control over all the features of the program. By simply using the select and start buttons on the computer you could, we read, 'record sound in memory' to be saved to disk or played back right then. We were so eager to see this work and work well that we set it up at a friends house where there is a \$5000.00 sound system we could use for input. Let me sum up the product by saying the whole thing was awful. The sound was as bad as you could imagine and the volume was so low that it was barely audible. This is not the first time Gemini has won our little award. Trying to make their graphics dump program MAGIC DUMP do what it was advertised to do should have been enough of a lesson for us but as most of you know I'm a slow learner but, not as slow as the people who marketed this product

Return of Heracles

by
Quality Software

disk only
list price \$34.95
Club price \$26.21
I am not going to say more than a couple of sentences about what should be another classic like 'Ali Baba'. Obviously this program has been written by the same author as 'Ali Baba' and is greater achievement and a good example of machine language adventure games. Return of Heracles is a graphic adventure of the first order. Set in ancient Greece, this game takes you on a tour of some of the most famous tales in history. The feeling of familiarity is definitely part fo the fun of this game but another part which should not be overlooked is the excellent human engineering of the game itself. Unlike most adventures this on is is controlled from the joystick with minimal keyboard interaction and is easy to learn to play. I would also like to add that it would definitely make a great party game if your guests were inclined to this type of game. You can have multiple players and have a great time with the adventure and not be easily bored. I rate this one very highly.

reviewed by
Wally Newell

1/2 off 1/2 off 1/2 off DATA PERFECT Half Off

list price \$99.95 / Club price \$50.00

Offer good on orders placed through Aug. 30, 1984

Data Perfect has long recognized as the most powerful data base on the market for Atari is now even better!! LJK has made the latest version available in both double and single density versions. The new double density version has almost 2.5 times the storage on a single disk as the old single version had. Not only that but they have rewritten the manuals and improved the menu selection to make this a truly extraordinary data base for the Atari. To help them launch this new release we will be selling Data Perfect for 1/2 off for the next 30 days. Act on this one before its too late. For those of you not familiar with Data Perfect. The program is a single load data base which will run in 32k. The program offers the most complete report generator we have seen to date. Data Perfect will handle up to 32 fields per record with a record size of up to 511 characters.

*** MAC/65 REVIEW

by OSS

List price (disk)\$80.00/Club price (disk)\$60.00

List price (cart)\$99.95/Club price (cart)\$74.95

After spending considerable time with most of the other Assemblers and Editors for the ATARI and ending up learning more about how to use the assembler than assembly language programming it's a pleasure to use MAC/65 from OSS.

MAC/65 does not teach you assembly language programming but leaves you free to learn and use assembly. It is a programming tool that is fast, easy to use and versatile.

There are two modes of program file entry. (EDIT & TEXTMODE) This means that files created on other assemblers, whether they contain line numbers or not, can be entered into MAC/65s' editor. Line numbers are automatically appended to text files in the textmode and are entered without error. I personally prefer an assembly language editor that supports line numbers. It's just too easy a point of reference when adding or deleting instructions.

The ATARI Assembler/Editor cartridge didn't handle code of any size and ATARIS' Macro Assembler was obscure at best. Both of these products contained severe bugs in their code that could stop a user dead in his tracks. At that point your faced with a fix-up of the utility or finding neat ways around the bugs, this is counter-productive. I have yet to find a serious flaw in MAC/65. Now I can get down to writing my machine code.

MAC/65 has quite a few additional features that are extremely useful. Files can be saved and loaded making these processes very fast compared to the list/enter format of most other assemblers. Since these files are tokenized they require only about half the disk space of a list format file. Tokenization also allows MAC/65 to check each line for proper syntax at time of entry thus eliminating one more potential problem at de-bugging time. Every little bit helps!

Since standard 6502 commands are supported you don't have to spend time learning a new instruction set. The editor should feel very comfortable to anyone who started with ATARIS Assembler Editor. However, MAC/65 has many features that make it a well rounded utility.

Other features include a versatile printer format instruction for margin setting, page width and length, and tab settings. Also a ".LOCAL" instruction allows multiple usage of labels for code built from disk libraries or code written by several programmers. Programmers can define blocks of code and not worry whether a label was used in another block. Conditional assembly is supported and allows the same code to be assembled differently depending on true or false (1 or 0) values within the program at assembly time. This is accomplished with the ".IF", ".ELSE" and ".ENDIF" directives. Now I'll address the MACRO part of MAC/65. I started hearing of macros about a year and a half ago. It was described to me as the last word in assembly facilities for a mini-computer. The idea of creating a block of code, giving it a name and using that name as an instruction appealed to me. I felt that MAC/65s' instruction manual could have covered the subject more effectively, no one else really has. I had to read the chapter on macros quite a few times but it was worth it.

The real power of a MACRO is parameter passing. I know that sounds a little computerish, so here it is simply. You can create a routine to perform a task and name that piece of code. (RALPH if you like) Now you might have RALPH add two numbers, or whatever, but not the same two numbers all the time. All you do is call RALPH and tell him the numbers to add. RALPH will give you the answer. You can do all this with a MACRO. The numbers to add are put right next to "RALPH" in your main assembly code. These are the parameters. They are each given a sequential number in the MACRO itself and preceded with a percent sign (%). Then each value is filled in when the MACRO is called in the main code. This allows different values to be used each time the MACRO is called. A lot of repetitive coding can be eliminated with the use of MACROS.

In conclusion, I would highly recommend MAC/65 as the only assembler worth serious consideration for the ATARI computer. I also strongly advise BUG/65 as a code debugging utility. These two products used together are tough to beat.

JUPITER 1999

Avalon Hill

Disk only

List price \$50.00

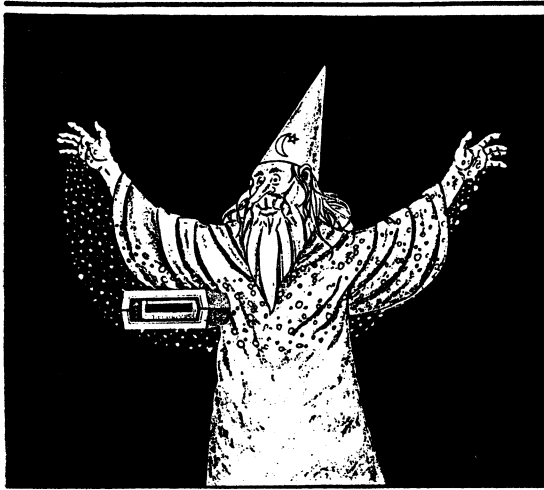
Club price \$37.46

This one has been one of the hardest games to review I have seen in a long time. Strangely enough the problem is that I can't decide if I like it or not. Let's get the basics out of the way first. This is a 4 disk arcade/adventure game with good graphics and fair sound. The game opens with a long text narrative which places you on the space ship begale lost somewhere between earth and jupiter. Your ship has been damaged and it's up to you to save the ship and its remaining crew. After this seemingly endless text moves across the screen (you can start the game without it if you chose) you move into the first of 9 games which make up the program. Each of the arcade type games is written in basic and is quite simple in concept. In the first you must shoot down some astroids before they hit your ship. The game has been rigged so you will always get hit by a few of the stray astroids since the second game of the program involves fixing the damage caused to your ship during the first game. My only problem with this first game is the fact that, although it is mildly interesting the first time it seems endless by the third time you play it. Completing this first game moves you to the repair game. This game consists of three flashing colors on the screen. When the color you have selected is flashing you press your 'fire' button. This is a simple reaction game which again must be played much longer than I would have

liked. The third game offers some super graphics and a little stronger challenge. You must set the new course for your ship. By the time you get to this point you have played the game for almost 40 minutes and have been bored to tears with two 'arcade games' written in basic. I finally decided that the only reason I was playing the game was in hopes that it would get better. For me it never did. I can't say this is a total bomb but it is not either a true strategy game or a good arcade game

DISK MAGIC

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BLAKMAGIC SOFTWARE

DISK MAGIC may well be the most comprehensive and user friendly disk utilities package you will ever use.

FEATURES

DISK MAP - Determine sector utilization & display various error codes

SECTOR EDITOR - Edit disassemble sector data in HEX or ATASCII
Recover unformattable disks & sectors

SHERLOCK - Search disk for all occurrences of HEX numbers or ATASCII strings

DRIVE SPEED - Calibrate drive speed & write BAD sectors

SMART COPY - Fast & reliable, this will allow you to back-up many commercial software products

DISK MAGIC has been tested on many of the currently available disk drives for the ATARI system

All this, PLUS, an excellent tutorial on ATARI disk structure & utilization to help you get Started.

***** LIST PRICE: \$24.95 *****

A Word Processor Comparison

Features

	Letter Wizard	Atari Writer	Bank St. Writer	Letter Perfect
Club Price	37.46	74.95	52.46	74.45
Cursor Movement				
Up Down Lft Rt.	*	*	*	*
Top of file	*	*	*	*
Bottom of file	*	*	*	*
Top of screen	*		*	*
Bottom of screen	*		*	*
Pageup, page down	*	*		*
begin'n of line	*	*		*
end of line	*	*		*
Tabs-Screen				
clear tabs	*	*		*
set tabs	*	*		*
Delete Text				
delete lines	*	*	*	*
delete blocks	*	*	*	*
delete files	*	*	*	*
delete lf of cursor	*	*		*
delete above cursor	*	*	*	*
delete below cursor	*	*	*	*
restore last deleted text	*	*	*	
restore deleted block	*	*	*	
Paragraphs				
automatic indent	*	*		
move text	*	*	*	*
duplicate text	*	*		*
search and replace	*	*	*	*
status window	*		*	
free memory	*	*	*	*
word count	*	*		
sector length	*			*
file name	*	*		*
insert & typeover mode	*	*	*	*

continued next page

LETTER WIZARD
datasoft
disk only
list price \$49.95
Club Price \$37.46

For those of you who are interested in a word processing package this is one that you should consider carefully. Most word processors in the past have offered either a very simple program to learn and therefore very little in the way of formatting and layout capabilities or a tremendous number of commands and options which required days and days of study to master. Datasoft seems to have reached a good balance between the two. The commands are easily learned and logical (something that is not always true). There are quite a few commands built into the system but the occasional user will only use a few of them for most of his/her work. As your needs increase you will find that this program will grow with you. This capabilities of Letter Wizard compare quite favorably with those of Letter Perfect in almost every respect. Datasoft has even gone to the point of building a small mailing list into the program which will merge with your form letters. In addition to that you can now merge with all versions of FILEMANGER from Synapse. Elsewhere on this page you will find a summary of the capabilities of some of the more popular word processor on the market for Atari. Check Letter Wizard out and then check the prices again and I think you will see why I think so highly of this new Datasoft product.

DOS Functions

format disk	*	*	*	*
catalog	*	*	*	*
rename files	*		*	
lock files	*		*	*
unlock files	*		*	*
delete files	*	*		*
section headings		*		
database merge	*	*		*
double column				
printing	*	*		*
80 column display				*
38 or 40 col. dis.	*	*	*	*
print preview		*	*	*

edit basic progs.	*	*	*	
DOS 2.0	*	*	*	
defines lines needed	*		*	*
error messages	*	*		
print menu	*			
CTRL codes to printer	*	*		
double density				*

Printer Compatibility

Epson MX,FX	*		*	*
Atari 825,820,822	*	*		*
Atari 1020,1025,1027	*	(2)		(3)
NEC 8023	*			(3)
Centronics	*	(2)		(3)
Star Gemini 10	*	(2)		(3)
Okidata	*	(2)		(3)

Print Styles

condensed (elite)	*	*		*
standard (pica)	*	*	*	*
proportional (true)	*	*		

Spelling Checker program available

*	*	*	(4)
---	---	---	-----

- (1) File merge with Syn File
 (2) Compatible with an extra cost (18.71) print driver
 (3) Compatible with the use of included print driver, but requires separate setup.
 (4) Spelling checker program included in the price of Letter Perfect.

Dragonriders of Pern

by Epyx

Disk only

List price \$39.95/Club price \$29.95

Those of us who have read, and liked, any of the 'Dragonrider' novels by Anne McCaffrey please read on! Others need not bother. I like this strategy action program very much and can relate to the game easily. I recommend it to anyone who wishes to go to Pern. To those of you who know not of Pern, I say shame on you. The game does justice to the author of both the program and the novels. My only caution is before you see the game read one of the books. Does that sound familiar?

The game is an exercise in politics and luck. You will find that you have adequate variety of options that control the difficulty as well as a multi player ability. You can select game length and you also may select thread fighting in 3-D (simulated). The graphics of the program are average to good. One of the surprises to you Epyx game players is that it is in machine language which makes a smooth playing program. You have the best of both worlds because it requires sound strategies as well as better than average hand-eye coordination. I feel that this should be a program to consider if you wish a lot of strategy, role playing, with a little arcade mixed in.

reviewed by

Wally Newell

FLAK

by Funsoft

Disk

List price \$34.95

Club price \$26.21

As I am sure you might expect a lot of software passes through our office in the space of a month. Most of it gets looked at for a short time and then put on the shelf never to be played again. Once in a while a game will come through which gets under peoples skin and they just can't stop playing it. Last month it was Boulder Dash and this month it's FLAK. Why FLAK? Well to start off with it's well done both from the point of game design and as a graphic package. The idea of the game is not new or unique, just fun. You are the pilot of a jet fighter which scrolls over the land very much like the plane in Blue Max. Your job is to use your forward cannons to fire on anti aircraft sights and knock them out before they knock you out (of the air). As you scroll further and further over enemy territory the graphics become better and better and the game becomes tougher and tougher. A sure sign of a good arcade game is when the players are ducking and twisting their heads as the game shoots at their plane. Anyone coming into our office would think we had hooked our chairs up to an electric wire judging by the way players were twitching and jerking around as they played. The action is very quick and if there is any flaw in this game it's the fact that there is just no letup (except the pause button) from the time you start a round until the time you pass the joystick so you can stop gritting your teeth.

EDUCATIONAL REVIEWS

by Linda Chester

JUGGLES HOUSE

ATARI, Inc
Disk only

This is the first of a series of reviews which I'll be doing on a regular basis for CompuClub. As a relative novice with computers (in truth I still get a real thrill when I turn my ATARI on and it works), I'll be passing on my opinions on the basis of:

- 1) Does it really teach? and
- 2) Do you actually learn?
- 3) Will your child use it more than once

Furthermore I'll be the first to admit that most educational programs alternatively intrigue and bore me. Also, I'm cheap and don't care to spend my money on junk-food software.

Speaking of which, where is the beef in JUGGLES' HOUSE? It's billed as "the ideal way to introduce your child to the world of computers" as well as the concepts of inside, outside, upper and lower. Now Juggles himself is a dapper looking gent who may have delusions of being a clown's answer to Boy George (or is it the other way around?). In any case the first part of this learning game requires that a windowlike blue key overlay which is packaged with the software be placed over your computer keyboard. After randomly exploring the concept of inside/outside, your child progresses to the mercifully brief directional portion of the game. Did I say game? I guess Juggles' real problem is that, like some teachers, he's a bit of a pedant and probably terribly proud of it. Hey, he's just not a fun guy. By the time he invites you into his playground, you're more

than a trifle irritated with the chap. Sure, the graphics and sound are snazzy but wouldn't your child prefer a less frustrating way of learning these concepts? Most children I know would and I'll keep my eyes out for one

STICKYBEAR, BOP, NUMBERS, ABC

Disk only
List Price \$39.95 ea
Club Price \$29.95 ea.

You parents all know the drill. You take the kids out for some fast food and try to convince them to order a couple of items with some nutritional value. And somehow they always sneak at least one empty-calorie treat into the deal. Such is the case with the STICKYBEAR series.

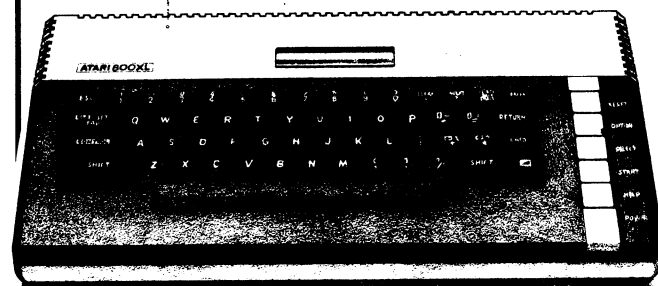
STICKYBEAR ABC and STICKYBEAR NUMBERS are genuine educational programs for children aged three to six. STICKYBEAR BOP is really a novelty. It is fun and the entire family can play this shooting gallery theme game, but not for its educational value since there is none. A word of caution though, your younger children may find the rounds above level one require the patience to practice. One wonders if the average ATARI-owning family needs another vehicle to instruct in eye-hand coordination. STICKYBEAR ABC and STICKYBEAR NUMBERS deal respectively with the task of introducing the letters of the alphabet and the numbers from 0 to 9. They're a nice alternative to the Sesame Street routines. Stickybear himself is a roly-poly gent with a wide variety of colleagues and interests. I'd have no problems inviting home to meet the family. All three programs come in a package containing Stickybear stickers and other assorted kid-geared paraphernalia. The graphics, sound and above all, ease of use make these an appealing addition to the family software library. There are no menus or screen directions to

hassle the user and they accomplish the educational objectives in a nice straightforward manner. On second thought, STICKYBEAR BOP might not be such a bad buy...and while I'm at it I think that I'll just slip back for another order of fries.

*****-it

by Jim Roth
Disk only
List price \$24.95 ea.
Club Price \$18.71 ea.

Now for some products with real meat! If you fancy buying filet mignon at chopped beef prices, then consider a group of software programs sold individually as ADD-IT, SUBTRACT-IT, and SPELL-IT. They feature a disparate cast of characters no big names, but such entertaining personalities such as hungry Scotties, hyperactive parachutists, and cool-eyed archers). Each menu-driven program consists of a series of four progressive, self-teaching levels which do fulfill their stated promise of "lots of sights and sounds to keep attention and make learning fun". A word of caution- these are excellent practice drills but it is assumed that the concept of adding and subtracting has been previously taught. The colorful graphics and non-annoying sounds are amusing and easy to use. There's a added bonus in the SPELL-IT program in that you or your child can create a personalized list of words from the dreaded weekly spelling list they receive at school. The user then has the option of receiving a print-out of any words missed more than once. These are a real buy for the parents of any students grades K through 3 (although the SPELL-IT can be utilized indefinitely). Kudos to Jim Roth (a computclub member) for some reasonable priced educational programs that really allow for the practice of basic concepts in a nonviolent manner!



Meet Linda and Julie

CompuClub is happy to introduce two new people who will be helping you in the future. The first is Linda Chester. Linda has a masters degree and 9 years experience in education and will be serving as our educational consultant. One of Linda's strongest plus's is the fact she has very little actual computer experience. We hope this will allow her to write about the quality/value of educational software and not just about the quality of the graphics. You will find Linda's column as a regular feature of the newsletters starting this month.

The second new person we have added is Julie Hutchinson. Julie will be helping us take and process your orders. Her background includes 4 years working with mainframe order entry systems and procedures. (alright stop cheering she hasn't done anything yet). Although she didn't get an Atari until she joined us Julie has been dragging home half the software in the office every night and thinks she will be up to speed on all the titles in a few months. Julie, Linda and everyone else here will be doing our best to help in anyway we can. Just give us a call and let us know what you need.

Buy Sell Swap

Atari Visicalc

with documentation

powerful spreadsheet program

\$100.00

Richard M. Farraci

19 Abbot Street

Andover, MA 01810

1-617-470-1899

After 6pm EDT

DOG OF THE MONTH

50 MISSION CRUSH

by

Strategic Simulations Inc.

I normally do not contribute my reviews to 'DOG OF THE MONTH', but in this case I will make an exception. My problems with this SSI game started before I ever opened the cover, the name has been poorly chosen, even though they are alluding to a term given the bomber captains of WWII. The program is 'a role playing game that puts you in charge of a B-17 Bomber. You will find yourself flying over Europe and attempting to bomb strategic locations. The program does do what it claims, but I would find a hand typed program from one of the better Atari magazines more entertaining.

The map of Western Europe is well drawn and is the highlight of the program. You must fly your plane from England to one of the computer selected targets on your map, and you will then have to bomb the target. My biggest objection to the program is that I did not feel as though I had control of my plane. I was not given enough responsibility, and therefore I felt (and I think most of you will feel the same way) bored very quickly. The only recommendation that I can give this program is that it is a great example of a good idea poorly implemented. I think SSI let this one out the door without thinking and should have told the programmer to donate this program to Commodore.

reviewed by

Wally Newell

WHAT YOU PAY FOR

The question most often asked by people interested in joining CompuClub is what do I get for my money. This short piece is an answer to that question for old and new members alike. We recorded our phone calls last March and sat down to analyze the tapes about three weeks ago. We discovered that almost 85% of our calls on our '800' lines are questions and service calls not 'order' calls. In reading mail order ads the phrase that we see in every one is 'order line only' on the '800' number and another non toll free line for questions. We feel if you are going to sell a product you must be willing to support it. It is our intention to continue providing support for both ATARI in general and products we sell. A further analysis of the orders places indicates that you are well aware of the fact that we will attempt to get any piece of software for ATARI and not just the items listed in our catalog. In this fast changing business (approx 30-50 products added or deleted per week) almost 20% of our orders are for product not in our catalog. Tracking down new products and buying them for evaluation rather than waiting until they are established takes more time than any other phase of our business but we feel its necessary to help you get the most out of your ATARI and CompuClub. We are of course proud of the fact we are willing to tell you about the bad products as well as the good in our newsletters.

We would be happy to hear from any of you (in writing please) about how much you value or don't value these small touches of service in an industry that seems to be moving from a computer store environment to a one more like a self service store.

WHY, OH WHY

As this is the first installment of CompuClubs Question and Answer column, and, seeing as how I have only one letter to answer, we shall begin by setting some ground rules.

- 1) Send your letters to

Q&A

PO Box 652

Natick, MA 01760

Please keep your questions short so that I can answer several per column. You may feel free, in your letters, to ramble on for as long as you wish, but keep the questions concise.

- 2) Personal responses will be difficult, at best. Living, as I do, in Brooklyn, which is, of course, a cultural center second to none, there aren't enough hours in a day to spend writing letters. If you enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope I will try to respond. Without the envelope you may consider yourself a snowball in hell. Be considerate.

- 3) Questions may be on any subject, but will be judged for mass interest, as interpreted by me. They will be answered based upon knowledge, as possessed by me.

- 4) If you don't want your name mentioned in the column, say so. Otherwise, I plan to name all guilty parties.

* * *Our first letter is from Todd Kuenzi, from Norfolk NE. His letter is too long to reprint, but it boils down to the following:

- 1)The differences between two products marketed by OSS: BASIC A+, and BASIC XL.

- 2)The chances of writing BASIC programs with a word processor or text editor, and then running them with the above. The purpose here is to create a structured look a la Pascal, or well written Forth.

The greatest difference between the 2 BASICs is that BASIC A+ is no longer commercially available. BASIC XL is a cartridge, which, when used with DOS XL (sold separately) maximizes available memory. (OS/A+, also asked about in the letter, is also a dim, but fond, memory.)

BASIC XL is a superset of ATARI BASIC, along with some MicroSoft Type enhancements. This means that 95% of programs written in ATARI BASIC will run unchanged. LEFT\$, MID\$, and RIGHT\$ are supported, unlike in ATARI BASIC.

There is also a TRACE function in BASIC XL, to aid in debugging programs.

Programs written with ATARI's Program Text Editor are compatible with all ATARI BASIC's, using the ENTER command. Other word processors tested also seem compatible. Letter Perfect files must be reformatted with LJKs file utility. However, you cannot use word processors to create structured appearances. ATARI compatible BASICs remove all un-needed spaces as a matter of course when tokenizing. BASIC XL does, however, indent FOR/NEXT loops when listing programs. The other problem is that, by writing programs on a text editor, you lose the value of working in an interpretive language. You can't test routines as you work, and you have no immediate syntax check. You do gain editor functions.

In closing, let me point out that the title of this column is the name of an old Woody Guthrie song. As mentioned, I'm from a cultural center.

Return of
Heracles

by
Quality Software

disk only

list price \$34.95

Club price \$26.21

I am not going to say more than a couple of sentences about what should be another classic like 'Ali Baba'. Obviously this program has been written by the same author as 'Ali Baba' and is greater achievement and a good example of machine language adventure games. Return of Heracles is a graphic adventure of the first order. Set in ancient Greece, this game takes you on a tour of some of the most famous tales in history. The feeling of familiarity is definitely part of the fun of this game but another part which should not be overlooked is the excellent human engineering of the game itself. Unlike most adventures this one is controlled from the joystick with minimal keyboard interaction and is easy to learn to play.

I would also like to add that it would definitely make a great party game if your guests were inclined to this type of game. You can have multiple players and have a great time with the adventure and not be easily bored. I rate this one very highly.

reviewed by
Wally Newell

CHANGES

Flight Simulator II
Delayed (again) until the end of July this time 37.45

Atari Touch Tablet
Price increase to \$67.45

Summer Games
Delayed for at least three more weeks

